

Three incoming passengers convicted and jailed for possessing duty-not-paid cigarettes (with photos)

Three men were each sentenced to three to four months' imprisonment and fined between \$500 and \$1,000 at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (March 27) for possessing duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare to Customs Officers, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO).

Customs officers intercepted three incoming male passengers, aged 36, 39 and 48, at Hong Kong International Airport yesterday (March 26). About 37 000, 39 000 and 40 000 duty-not-paid cigarettes, with an estimated market value of about \$484,000 and a duty potential of about \$390,000 in total, were seized from their personal baggage. They were subsequently arrested.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences. Customs reminds members of the public that under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any person who deals with, possesses, sells or buys illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/en).



